

MICHIGAN LITERACY: From Lagging to Leading

The case for business and philanthropic leaders to engage in elevating education



**HIGH
ALERT**

28th
in Nation
in 2003

dropped
to

41st
in Nation
in 2015

In 4th grade literacy*

*National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2003 & 2015 data

Michigan is facing a literacy crisis.

For the last 12 years, while nearly all other states across the country made gains in their literacy performance for 4th graders, Michigan lagged behind. This means Michigan is one of the lowest performing states, with no literacy growth demonstrated. The impact of this pattern in 4th grade is that more students struggle throughout school and many graduate without strong literacy skills. More than 50% of Michigan's K-12 students are not proficient in their English Language Arts skills according to state tests. With over half a million students ill-equipped in literacy, as a state we face significant hurdles. Our young people are unprepared; unprepared for the workforce, unprepared for college or career training, and unprepared to be productive citizens. Many will face incarceration or turn to government assistance to survive. **It is estimated that the cost of illiteracy to U.S. businesses and taxpayers is approximately \$300 billion a year.** We can't afford to ignore these staggering facts.

Setting the Stage for Change

Michigan's governor, legislators, business leaders and educators recognize that literacy incompetence is one of the most pressing issues facing our state. Action steps taken include:

- **3rd grade reading bill**, which is now law
- Formation of the **Governor's Pre-K-12 Literacy Commission**
- The **legislature allocated funds** for early literacy assessment reimbursement, professional development, coaching, and extended instructional time supports
- **Early Literacy Task Force** formed and provides instructional, coaching, and school-level guidance
- The regional **Reading Now Network** focuses on school and leader literacy practices
- The Michigan Department of Education has revised the **Michigan Literacy Plan** and is now poised to provide direction for K-12 literacy across the state.

While these steps have provided the beginning of a focus on early literacy, the work is much more expansive.

The Power of Possibilities

We need support to build a sustainable approach to literacy development. This demands a solid 5-7 year commitment that requires ALL stakeholders. Expectations are:

- EVERY child makes at least one year of growth in their literacy skills each year producing highly literate high school graduates
- All children read at grade level after being in a Michigan school for several years
- Teachers are using literacy practices at the early childhood and early elementary level in every classroom, every day, with every child
- As children develop, our literacy approaches expand along with them, so every teacher in every subject area is attending to the literacies critical in their fields
- Michigan youth are strong in reading comprehension and can communicate clearly through writing and speaking

ALL educational groups are working together in a unified way to meet the needs of Michigan's children.

The Journey to Excellence

How do we get there? It starts with solid early childhood programs and support. It grows with a K-12 education system that is committed to rigorous, quality instruction support by coaches and learning systems (for preservice and practicing teachers). It depends on robust leadership that is skilled and adaptive at creating systems and supports for learners--and skilled at creating healthy learning communities.

Literacy Theory of Action

Align policies, funding, and resources

Develop state regional, local, literacy leaders

Embed and sustain quality professional learning through coaching

Develop teachers' instructional skills

Implement quality practices in every classroom every day

Every child develops strong early literacy knowledge, skills and dispositions



The first and most important step has been taken and we want to build on this momentum.

Phase 1: Laying the groundwork (2015-17)

- ✓ Develop strong policy (3rd grade reading bill)
- ✓ Maximizing Michigan's education system model by building coalitions (Early Literacy Task Force, Reading Now Network)
- ✓ Establish Literacy Commission

Phase 2: Establishing the focus (2016-18)

Defining instruction improvement and strategy

- ✓ Identify essential literacy teaching practices (PreK; K-3; 4-5 Essential Instructional Practices developed. Birth-3 years and Grade 6-12 in progress)
- ✓ Establish coaching model
- ✓ Establish and train ISD literacy coaches (118 trained coaches now supporting districts, eight days of professional learning for each)
- ✓ Train Early Childhood Specialists (two institutes)
- ✓ Develop online modules for teachers with video examples (20 introductory modules in development)
- ❖ Pilot and evaluate training programs and establish networks of coaches

Leadership -- Focus shared vision and goals

- ✓ Literacy Commission Strategic Plan
- ❖ Adopt revised Michigan Literacy Plan
- ❖ Marketing/communication campaign
- ❖ Establish sustainable funding mechanisms
- ❖ Coordinate efforts between pre-kindergarten and K-3 learning systems

Phase 3: Expanding and deepening the literacy footprint (2018-21)

Instruction

- ❖ 2,000 elementary schools in Michigan have trained coaches
- ❖ All coaches receive introductory to advanced training (600 have received introductory training and 30 have received advanced training)
- ❖ 25,000 teachers are trained in the Essential Practices, including all recent graduates
- ❖ New professional standards for literacy at university and college programs are established
- ❖ Coaches are supporting 25,000 teachers to enact practices
- ❖ Pre K teachers are trained and supported in the Essential Practices

Strengthen Literacy Leadership and School Level Supports

- ❖ Train all 2,000 building principals
- ❖ Scale instructional rounds model from the Reading Now Network
- ❖ Support district leaders
- ❖ Reading Now Network expansion and leadership development

Phase 4: Expectations realized

● A new normal exists with institutionalized practices

- ❖ Coaches remain an integral part of literacy support
- ❖ Coaches continue to support and assist in improving teacher practices
- ❖ Literacy leadership teams drive school-level literacy focus
- ❖ Evaluation and feedback of effectiveness of practices

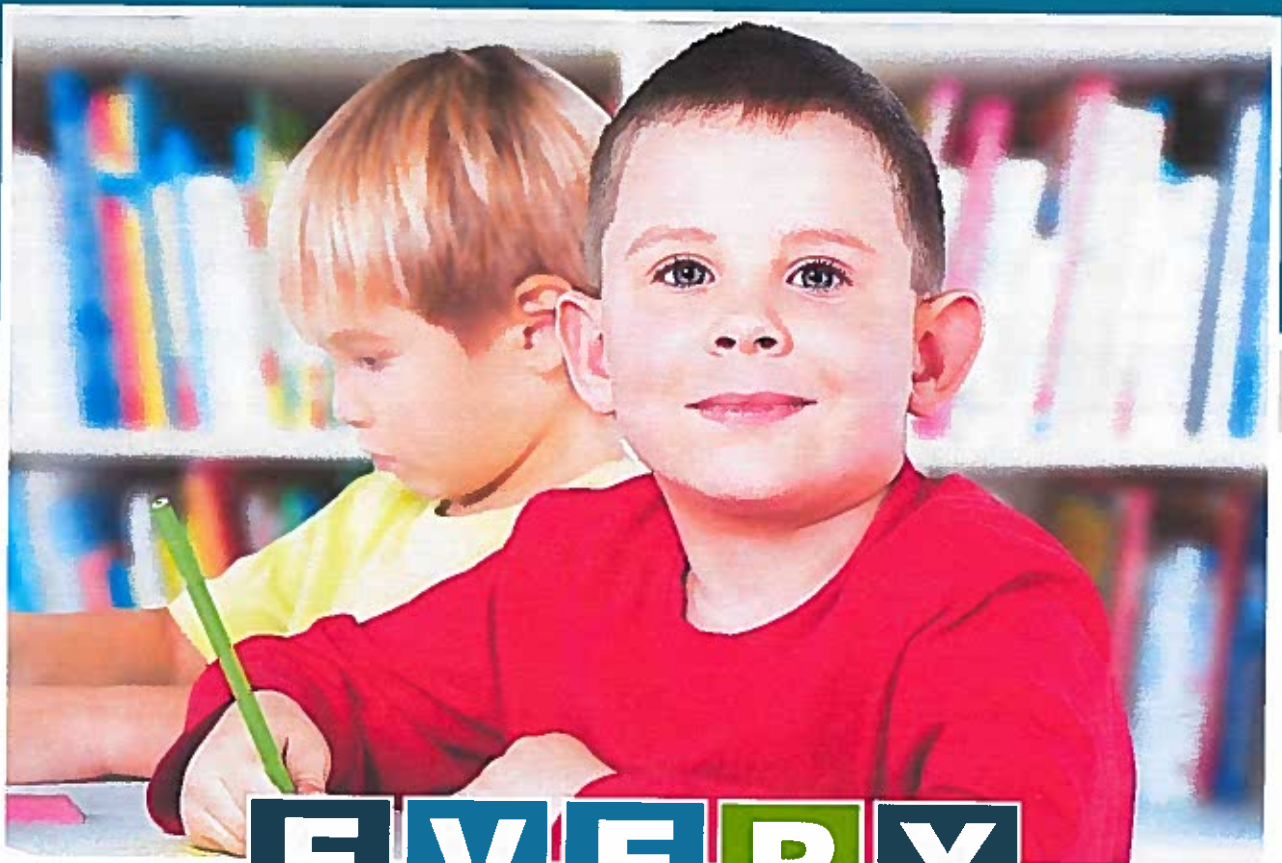
● Systems of improvement and development of leaders, teachers

- ❖ Statewide literacy conferences on a regular basis
- ❖ Coaching networks with ongoing professional learning
- ❖ Teacher networks with ongoing professional learning
- ❖ Pre-K programs engage in ongoing professional literacy learning
- ❖ Across district leadership learning teams engaging in collaborative inquiry to focus on any emerging literacy challenges



Return on Investment

- ❖ More students graduate from high school
- ❖ Graduates are prepared for college and careers in Michigan-based companies
- ❖ Michigan schools are producing strong, critical thinkers ready to lead in key positions
- ❖ More third graders are literacy proficient and incarceration statistics drop
- ❖ Higher passing rates in college classes
- ❖ Attracting a new generation of educators, reducing the teacher shortage



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